

## Sūrah A‘lā

### Central Theme and Relationship with the Preceding *Sūrah*

Sūrah Tāriq, the previous *sūrah* ended on urging the Prophet (sws) to show patience and to wait for the decision of God. He was told that those who have become persistent in denying him have been given respite by the Almighty according to His established practice in this regard and this period is soon to end. He was asked to give them respite also; soon they will see the consequences of their rebellious attitude; he should rest assured that they will not be able to escape God’s grasp; He has total control over them.

Now, in this *sūrah*, while ignoring these stubborn elements from among the Quraysh, the Prophet (sws) is addressed directly and given glad tidings that every work of God manifests itself in a gradual and sequential way and this gradual and sequential way is based entirely on His wisdom. The Prophet (sws) should trust Him; soon the time is going to arrive when his efforts will bear fruit and all hindrances which stand in his way shall be removed. This change in address is evident in at least the next ten *sūrahs*. If ever the adversaries are addressed, they are addressed in a secondary manner. It is the Prophet (sws) who is primarily addressed and through various styles all his worries and fears which came his way during the course of his preaching or which were expected to come are dispelled.

### Analysis of the Discourse

Following is the sequence of the discourse of the *sūrah*:

**Verses (1-5):** The Prophet (sws) is directed to continuously extol the Almighty and is reminded of those of God’s attributes which testify that all His works manifest in a gradual and sequential manner. Just as vegetation gradually becomes lush and dense, similarly a person’s physical and intellectual abilities also reach their culmination in a gradual manner.

**Verses (6-8):** Glad tidings are given to the Prophet (sws) that he too will be dealt with in accordance with the above outlined law. The favour of revelations that he is receiving will gradually reach its culmination and will be taught to him in such a thorough manner that he will not forget even a word of it except if the Almighty wants him to leave aside

---

something. He is aware of the apparent and the hidden. He fully knows the circumstances the Prophet (sws) is facing or will be facing. From within hardships, He will create ease for him.

**Verses (9-13):** The Prophet (sws) is directed not to go after the stubborn and the obdurate. He is not responsible for making those listen who do not want to listen. Only they will listen who have fear of the Almighty and the Hereafter. The unfortunate will evade it and then see their fate.

**Verses (14-15):** Glad tidings of success are given to the fortunate who purified themselves and remembered their Lord and prayed to Him.

**Verses (16-19):** The disbelievers are addressed and admonished on their real mistake: giving preference to this world over the next. It is for this reason that the message of the Prophet (sws) does not find roots in their hearts even though it is the life of the Hereafter which is better than this life and also eternal. All previous prophets and scriptures have taught this.

### Text and Translation

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى (١) الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى (٢) وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى (٣) وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى (٤) فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَى (٥) سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى (٦) إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى (٧) وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَى (٨) فَذَكَرْ إِنَّا نَفَعْتُمُ الدَّكْرَى (٩) سَيِّدًا كَرِيمًا (١٠) وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى (١١) الَّذِي يَصْلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى (١٢) ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَا (١٣) قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى (١٤) وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى (١٥) بَلْ تُؤْتِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا (١٦) وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى (١٧) إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى (١٨) صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى (١٩)

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful.

Glorify the name of your Lord! The Most High, Who made a sketch and then perfected it, and Who set destinies and then gave guidance and Who brought forth vegetation and then made it lush green. (1-5)

We shall recite to you, then you will not forget except what Allah pleases. He knows what is apparent and what is hidden. And We shall lead you towards ease. (6-8)

So, remind them, if reminding is beneficial. The fearful will benefit from it and the wretched will evade it. He will enter the Great Fire. Then neither will he die nor live in it. (9-13)

Successful shall be he who purified himself and remembered his Lord's name and then prayed. (14-15)

But you people give preference to this worldly life even though the life

to come is better and more lasting. This is the teaching of the earlier scriptures as well – the scriptures of Abraham and Moses. (16-19)

### Explanation

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى<sup>1</sup>

It has been explained at many places in this *tafsīr* that the word *tasbīh* serves to absolve the Almighty of all things which are against His majesty. It is the true comprehension of God which is the fountainhead of knowledge and cognizance, power and belief. If an error creeps into this comprehension, man is led away from true knowledge and gets caught in the tentacles of Satan. The result is that the heart of a person becomes devoid of the blessing of belief and trust and of the light of inner satisfaction. He also becomes bereft of the resolve to persevere and persist against the vicissitudes of life. It is the true comprehension of God and His remembrance which strengthens the heart of a person and keeps it content and on the right path: (٢٨:١٣) أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ (13:28) (surely in the remembrance of God all hearts are comforted, (13:28))

It has been explained at various places in this *tafsīr* that the highest form of *tasbīh* is the prayer, especially the *tahajjud* prayer. However, just as air is the most essential requirement for the physical existence of a human being, similarly, the remembrance of God is essential for his spiritual existence. For this reason, not only during the prayers, it is essential that one keeps his heart fresh with the remembrance of God while carrying out other routines of life so that Satan is not able to get the better of a person. I have already explained this aspect under the following verse of Sūrah Muzzammil: (٧:٧٣) إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا (During the daytime also, you have a lot of time for glorifying the Almighty, (73:7)).

Here the Prophet (sww) has been directed to do *tasbīh* to attain fortitude and perseverance; hence the word is used in its comprehensive meaning here.

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى<sup>2</sup>

In this verse and some of the subsequent ones, attention is directed at certain attributes of the Almighty – attributes which show that all of Almighty's works and plans are carried out in a gradual manner – a scheme which itself is totally based on His wisdom. Thus it is essential for a person to fulfil the directives of God with patience and steadfastness and remain in the hope that the final destination of the path

1. Glorify the name of your Lord! The Most High.

2. Who made a sketch and then perfected it.

on which He has directed a person to tread will soon come with all its blessings. Any delay in this is based on the wisdom of God and any hardships he may encounter in this way will carry benefits for him not only in this world but also in the Hereafter.

The common meaning of the word خَلَقَ is “to create”; however, it also means “to make a sketch or an effigy of something”. For example, it is used in this meaning in the verse: أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ (from clay I will make for you the effigy of a bird. Then I shall breathe into it and, by God’s leave, it shall become a living bird, (3:49))

The word تَسْوِيَةٌ (verbal noun of سَوَّى) means “to improve something”, “to flatten something” and “to perfect something”. Contextual indication shows that here it is used in the last of these meanings. The implication is that if man only reflects upon his own creation, he will come to realize that he has not been made instantaneously; he has reached culmination after passing through many stages. Initially, a sketch is made of him and slowly he passes through various stages and ultimately becomes a complete individual.

وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ (٣)<sup>3</sup>

Same is the case regarding the development of a person’s abilities and in his reaching the pinnacle of his material and spiritual skills. The Almighty has also placed in him the thirst for things on which he is dependent and has also provided for him the means and resources to acquire these things, and also blessed him with the ability to benefit from these. For example, if a child needs milk, then he has been provided with it through the bosoms of his mother and has also been guided to suck her bosoms and feed himself with it.

Later, when his needs expand, each person is provided from the repositories and treasures of this earth. He has also been given the intellect required to search for these treasures and adopt ways to reach them and invent means to benefit from them.

Similarly, for this spiritual and moral development, the Almighty has ingrained in him the awareness of good and evil and sent prophets and messengers to him for his guidance. These personalities were sent to instruct him about the path which is in accordance with his nature and benefiting from which will make him attain salvation and also to delineate to him the path which is incongruous with his nature and will lead him to doom.

Moreover, the Almighty has destined for man all phases and places, tests and trials he is going to encounter from his birth to death. He has also divulged to man the way to deal with all these things. If he adopts this way, he will safely pass through the vicissitudes of life and if he deviates from it and follows his own whims and desires, he will end up doomed. Such are the comprehensive meanings implied in this brief verse. The details abound and it is not possible to exhaustively state them here. I have already explained these under the following verse of Sūrah Tāhā: (٥٠:٢٠) “Our Lord,” he replied, “is He that gave all creatures their physical form and then rightly guided them,” (20:50))

وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَىٰ (٤) فَجَعَلَهُ عُتَّاءً أَحْوَىٰ (٥)<sup>4</sup>

There is a literary complexity which arises in these verses. It needs to be understood first so that the real stress of these verses can be appreciated.

Generally, people have translated the expression عُتَّاءٌ أَحْوَىٰ as “black litter” or “black waste material”; although the word عُتَّاءٌ in Arabic means froth and waste material, however, the word أَحْوَىٰ is never used for blackness which results from decay, decomposition and old age; it, on the contrary, is used for reddish or greenish blackness which is evident on something because of freshness, fertility and luxuriance. It is often used as an adjective for vegetation and orchards and without any exception is used for their luxuriant growth and intense lushness. From this root meaning, it came to be used for a strong, burly and robust young man. The reason for this is that people who are very healthy and who have plenty of blood in their bodies have blackish red lips. Thus, the famous poet of the *jāhilliyah*, period Ta'bbata Sharraṇ, while extolling a person says:

مسبل في الحيّ أحوى رفل  
وإذا يغزوا فسمع أزل

(In this manner, he remains a well-dressed, fair and red complexioned young smart person; however, when he enters a battle field, he becomes a lion of the jungle.)<sup>5</sup>

The word عُتَّاءٌ though means the froth of butter and the waste material

4. And Who brought forth vegetation and then made it lush green.

5. Khaṭīb al-Tabrizī, *Sharḥ diwān al-ḥamāsah*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-qalam, n.d.), 344.

of flood water, it is also very commonly used for the vegetation which becomes dense and blackish because of fertility of the land. Imām Farāhī in his *Mufradāt al-Qur'ān* has furnished a number of couplets from classical Arabic poetry of the *jāhiliyyah* period to substantiate this meaning. For the sake of brevity, I will confine myself to citing just one couplet of Qaṭṭāmī which he wrote while praising a valley. He says:

حلوا بأخضر قد مالت سرارته  
من ذي غشاء على الأعراض انضاد

(They descended in a lush green valley on the borders of which luxuriant and thick undergrowth was enmeshed and stacked on each other in layers.)<sup>6</sup>

In the verse under discussion, since the word غُشَاءٌ is qualified by the adjective أَحْوَى hence it is necessarily used in the second of the meanings referred to above otherwise there would be great disagreement between the noun and the adjective which qualifies it. The reason, as I have pointed out above, is that the word أَحْوَى is never used for the blackness which is the result of decay, decomposition and old age of something. There is no example of such usage in classical Arabic. Moreover, the context and placement of the verse also does not accept this meaning, as shall be presently explained. Hence the correct meaning of the verses: فَجَعَلَهُ غُشَاءً أَحْوَى وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى would be that one should extol the Almighty who brings forth vegetation in the form of delicate stem-stalks and then makes them luxuriant and blackish green.

سَنُقَرِّئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى (٦) إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى (٧)<sup>7</sup>

These verses state the real message which was meant to be put across to the Prophet (sws) and for which the previous verses served as an introduction. The implication is that the law of gradual development which is in currency to perfect man's being and to apportion and destine abilities and energies and to nurture them and which is instrumental in producing vegetation and making it grow, the same law will be employed by the Almighty in dealing with him. The phases of his prophethood and the divine revelation sent down to him will also reach

6. Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Farāhī, *Mufradat al-qur'ān*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (Azamgarh: Maṭba' al-islāh, 1358 AH), 58.

7. We shall recite to you, then you will not forget except what Allah pleases. He knows what is apparent and what is hidden.

their culmination in a gradual manner. Soon the time will arrive when he will surmount all the difficulties of the path he has been asked to tread and will reach his destination

The context and occasion of the verse *فَلَا تَنْسَى* is exactly the same as the following verses of Sūrah Tāha and Sūrah Qiyāmah respectively: *وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُفْصَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ* (20:114) (and be not in haste with the Qur'ān before its revelation is completed to you, (20:114)) and *لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ* (75:16-19) (do not move your tongue swiftly to hastily acquire this [Qur'an] (75:16-19)). While explaining these verses, I have written in detail that the only support to the Prophet (sws) to combat the hindrances and opposition he was facing in this period of his preaching mission was this divine help which was sent down to him in the form of revelations. This would provide necessary resources to him to tread this path and the guidance that was needed in future. Similarly, this would also help him in answering the objections and responding to the demands raised by his adversaries. For these multifarious reasons, he would always be waiting for divine revelation to descend to him and when it would come, he would show haste and eagerness in acquiring it. This impatience is similar to the one shown by an infant in reaching out for its mother's bosom. He would be so enthusiastic at this instance that he would want that he acquire all the revelation in one go and since the Qur'ān was also a great asset which was being entrusted to him by the Almighty, he would repeat each and every word of the revelation lest any of it might slip away from his memory.

The Almighty has assured him at his eagerness and hastiness: He has been told to not show haste; the Almighty Himself has set a timeline for it according to which it would be revealed and there is great wisdom in this scheme.

The Almighty has also assured the Prophet (sws) that he should not fret over its preservation. The Almighty Himself has taken upon Himself to preserve it in such a foolproof manner that the Prophet (sws) will not forget it. In Sūrah Qiyāmah, this assertion is made in the following words:

لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ فَإِذَا قَرَأَهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ (٧٥ : ١٦-١٩)

Do not move your tongue hastily on it. Indeed, upon Us is its collection and recital. So when We have recited it out, follow this recital. Then upon Us is to explain it. (75:16-19)

The expression إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ (except what Allah pleases) alludes to the fact that only temporary and interim things are an exception to this rule. The Almighty will Himself inform the Prophet (sws) when their term expires. The reference is to the temporary directives which were later abrogated.

The sentence إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى (He knows what is apparent and what is hidden) implies that the Almighty is not unaware of the circumstances the Prophet (sws) is passing through. He is fully aware of them and knows what is apparent and what is hidden in this regard. The implication is that the Almighty is aware of all his worries as well as his prayers and also aware of the open pranks and the hidden conspiracies of his enemies. When everything is in His knowledge and He also possesses power and authority, the Prophet (sws) should rest assured that he will be provided whatever help he requires. This subject is mentioned in even more detail in Sūrah Tāha in the following words:

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَى وَإِنْ تَجَهَّرَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ  
يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَالْخَفَى (٢٠: ٦-٧)

In His control is what is in the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them and also what is beneath the earth. Whether you speak aloud or silently, he has knowledge of all that is hidden and what is most hidden. (20:6-7)

It should be kept in consideration that that true faith and trust in God emanates from a strong awareness of His all-embracing knowledge and His all-encompassing power.

وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَى (٨)<sup>8</sup>

These words give glad tidings to the Prophet (sws) in very clear words: the hardships he is currently facing will one day end and the Almighty will lead him towards ease. The word يُسْرَى is an adjective of a suppressed noun similar in meaning to طَرِيقَةٌ. I have already explained the meaning of تَيْسِيرٌ at some place in this *tafsīr*. It means to prepare something for a higher objective. It is evident from this word that the difficulties the Prophet (sws) is currently passing through are meant to train and discipline him and so that the Almighty can make him entitled to His favours and blessings in the future. This is actually the natural corollary of the law of God stated above in the words: وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ فَجَعَلَهُ غَنَاءً أَحْوَىٰ أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَىٰ وَالَّذِي

8. And We shall lead you towards ease.



their destinies and then gave guidance and Who brought forth vegetation and then made it lush green).

In other words, the hardships he is encountering are right in accordance with the law of God to train and discipline him. The way ahead is clear. He should rest assured that he will be guided and it is only after difficulties that ease comes.

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى (٩)<sup>9</sup>

The verse implies that the Prophet (sws) should not get perturbed and distressed. It is not his responsibility to force down his message on others. His only responsibility is to remind others when he thinks that they are inclined to listen to him; otherwise he should leave them to their fate.

سَيَذَكَّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى (١٠) وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى (١١) الَّذِي يَصَلِي النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى (١٢) ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَا (١٣)<sup>10</sup>

These verses inform the Prophet (sws) of the type of people who will pay heed to his message and those who will evade it. The implication is that those who are evading his calls are not doing so because there is some shortcoming in it or in its preacher; in fact, it is because they themselves have something wrong in them. They regard this life to be all that there is. They have no fear of the Hereafter. Such unfortunate people should be left to themselves. They shall be flung in the great Fire which is ready for them. They will neither live in it nor die and will remain in its eternal torment. They will wish for death but it will not come to relieve them of their miseries.

Here it might be appropriate to refresh our memories about the practice of God that I have explained at many places in this *tafsīr*: people who honour and protect the light with which the Almighty has lit up their nature find the message of a prophet as the call of their hearts. Even if this light has dimmed, soon or late they wake up after being prodded and prompted by their prophet; however, in people in which this light has been totally extinguished, they are rather like the dead; only the trumpet blown on the Day of Judgement will awaken them.

In the following verse of Sūrah Ghāshiyah, the succeeding *sūrah* and counterpart of this *sūrah*, this subject is referred to in even more detail:

9. So, remind them, if reminding is beneficial.

10. The fearful will benefit from it and the wretched will evade it. He will enter the Great Fire. Then neither will he die nor live in it.

فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّى وَكَفَرَ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ  
الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ (٨٨: ٢١-٢٦)

Just remind them, for your duty is only to remind them; you are not to force them. [He who will embrace faith, will succeed]. As for he who turns away and denies, God will punish him gravely. Indeed, to Us will they return. Then it is upon Us to call them to account. (88:21-26)

These verses mention the words الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ (the great torment) and in the verse under discussion the words are النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى (the great fire). Both refer to the same thing in slightly different styles, and, God willing, I shall explain them in the *tafsīr* of the next *sūrah*.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى (١٤) وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى (١٥)<sup>11</sup>

In the previous verses, the fate of people who had evaded the calls of the Prophet (sws) is mentioned. Now in these verses is mentioned the reward of people who are referred to earlier by the words سَيَذَكِّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى (he who is fearful will benefit from it). They are the ones who benefited from the reminders of the Prophet (sws) and who purified and cleansed themselves from the filth of polytheism and disbelief. For them there is success in this world and in the Hereafter also they will receive the pleasure and blessings of the Almighty.

The words وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى (and remembered his Lord's name and then prayed) mention the foremost manifestation of this purification and its real method also. I have indicated above that the fountainhead of all knowledge is the names of God. It is from these names that the attributes of God become evident and it is evident from only these attributes what our beliefs should be and the obligations these beliefs impose on us regarding God and His people. In other words, the prayer is mentioned as the foremost manifestation of belief in the Almighty. I have elaborated at various places in this *tafsīr* that the foremost manifestation of belief is the prayer and then it is that belief which is the foundation of all the directives of the *sharī'ah* and is its guardian also. More details of this can be found in the explanation of the initial verses of Sūrah Mu'minūn.

11. Successful shall be he who purified himself and remembered his Lord's name and then prayed.

بَلْ تُؤْتِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا (١٦) وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْنَى (١٧)<sup>12</sup>

Here at the end the Quraysh are addressed and the real reason of their adversity is unravelled: It is their blind love for this world which is the actual cause of this animosity. They are not ready to believe in the Hereafter nor ready to give up their illegitimate vested interests for it and for this reason they invent baseless doubts and spread them among the commoners to give them the wrong impression that they are justified in rejecting Islam; however, they must remember that they are being very naïve in losing the eternal kingdom of heaven by giving in to the love of this very transient world; they should also consider the fact that the Hereafter is more lasting and permanent and if they have any sense they should try to reap its rewards.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى (١٨) صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى (١٩)<sup>13</sup>

The implication of this verse is that whatever the Prophet (sws) is telling his addressees is not something new or unique. Earlier prophets too taught no different a message. The message they gave was that real life is the life of the Hereafter and there only a person's own deeds will be of any benefit to him. No other person will bear any other person's burden. In Sūrah Najm, this aspect is stated in the following words:

أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى أَلَّا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى (٥٣: ٣٦-٣٨)

Has he not been informed of the teaching of the Scriptures of Moses and of Abraham, who passed every test he was put in; [it is written] that no soul shall bear another's burden. (53:36-38)

The scriptures given to Moses and to a number of prophets sent to the Israelites are today found in the books of the Bible. Even though they have been altered quite a lot and their status is not much different than books of history, however, all of these very clearly and very effectively depict the teachings of monotheism and life in the hereafter at numerous occasions. So moving are these scriptures that whichever is read, one's faith is revived. Though Abraham (sws) did not leave a scripture for the guidance of his people and it was more in the shape of oral sermons and exhortations, however one branch of his progeny – the Israelites – had

12. But you people give preference to this worldly life even though the life to come is etter and more lasting.

13. This is the teaching of the earlier scriptures as well – the scriptures of Abraham and Moses.

preserved them in writing and their prophets continued to remind them of these teachings in their respective eras. Irrefutable testimony to this is found even today and their scriptures, and the Qur'ān has also referred to it at various instances.

The other branch of Abraham's progeny – the Ishmaelites – did not preserve his teachings in writing. The reason for this was that they were unlettered people not conversant with writing. They did preserve his teachings in the form of traditions for some time; however, with the passage of time they were gradually thrown into oblivion and religious innovations dominated these teachings to such an extent that they were totally forgotten. After the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad (sws), these teachings were not only revived, they were also completed and it was these teachings that came to be regarded as the foundation of this perfect religion which is now the real religion of God till the Day of Judgement.

With the grace and blessings of God, the *tafsīr* of this *sūrah* comes to its completion. فالحمد لله على إحسانه (all gratitude be to God for his favours).

Lahore

2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1979 AD

11<sup>th</sup> Dhū al-Hijjah 1399 AH

---